

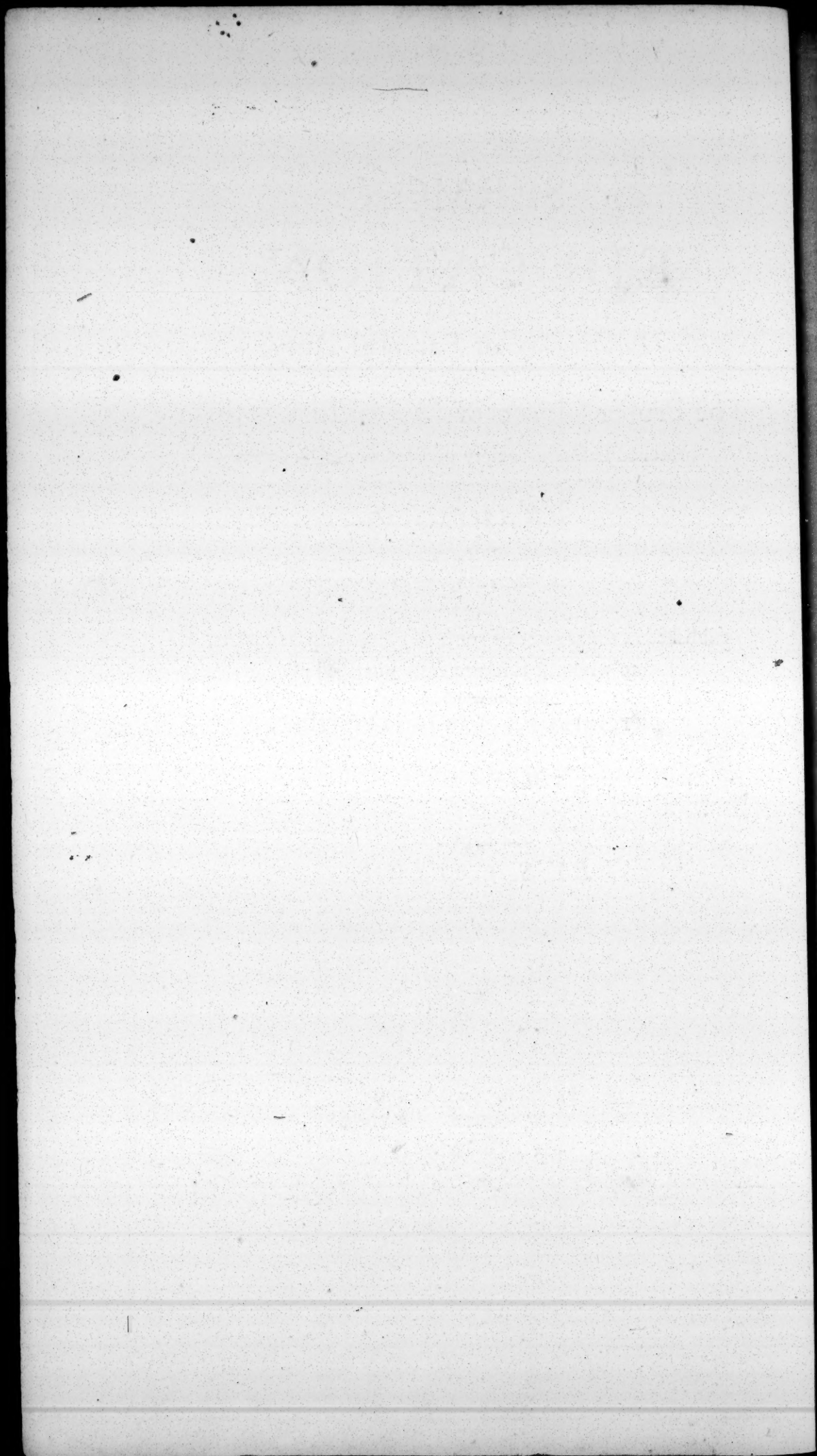
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A
SERMON
on
EDUCATION,
including
A Display of Parental Duty,
and
The Proper Objects of Liberal Instruction:
preached before a Society of Protestant Dissenters
at
BRADFORD,
YORKS.
June 28th, 1789,
and
published at the request of some of the principal auditors,
to whom it is respectfully inscribed ;
affixed to which are the
OUTLINES OF A PLAN OF EDUCATION,
established at
MANSFIELD,

BY S. CATLOW.



Printed for the Author by
GEORGE NICHOLSON, BRADFORD,
and sold in London by
J. Johnson, *St. Paul's Church-yard*, & T. Knott, *Lombard-street*.





A SERMON, &c.

Ephesians vi. 4.

----BUT BRING THEM UP IN THE NURTURE AND
ADMONITION OF THE LORD.

WHEN we take an enlarged view of mankind, and contemplate them in the first rudiments of society, and thro' the progressive periods of civilization and refinement; in the simple, placid scenes of pastoral life, as well as in the busy circles of commercial states, and in the boisterous regions of military domination;----when, with the eye of philosophers, we scan the first principles of human nature, recur to the original qualities of our constitution, and then range over the wide and instructive page of general

history ;----when we combine our knowledge of the various customs, genius and improvements of different nations, with those ideas which will arise from the study and impression of a liberal system of ethical or moral principles, to what source shall we be inclined to trace that amazing diversity of sentiments and actions which is exhibited by mankind in the various quarters of our globe ? ----to the operation of what principles shall we ascribe the exaltation of some national powers to a pitch of glory and honor never attained by others ?----or, in private life, how shall we account for the great superiority of some individuals, both in bodily accomplishments and mental endowments to others, who live under the same laws ? ----Is it not Education that constitutes the chief cause of difference ?----Is it not that powerful principle that influences the fate of nations and the condition of private individuals ;----that determines, in spite of the original equality of men, that mighty diversity in the improvements and conduct of mankind which excites and gratifies the curiosity of the philosopher and the moralist ? ----Was it not the superior excellence of this op-

erative power that caused a few Grecian bands to brave and resist the fury of millions, poured upon them by Persian despots ; that caused the Roman state, in its infancy, to rise superior to its numerous hostile neighbors, and, in its meridian glory, to assume the empire of the earth ?----And is it not to the wise modification of this principle that the former and present eminence of Britain may be chiefly ascribed ; that her brilliancy of fame, in every line of human excellence, may be reasonably traced ? Is the influence of climate supposed to include an adequate cause for these wonderful effects ; the neighborhood or distance of seas, rivers, rocks or woods ?----Is the adventitious circumstance of complection, the different gradations of color, from the jetty skin of the Indian to the fair, ruddy countenance of the European, possessed of such mighty power in determining the mental habits ? Away with such unphilosophical dogmas ; let them not be considered as included in the number of those principles which give complection to the human character ! If there were any justice in them, there would have been a greater uniformity in the present and ancient

manners and genius of the various nations of the globe;----the hardy and venerable spirit of ancient Rome would not have softened into the effeminate, lascivious genius of modern Italy;----that ardent love of liberty, and that high zest for manly and liberal cultivation, characteristic of the Athenian and Spartan states, would not have been, for ages past, evaporated, nor would the present superstitious gloom of Turkish despotism be exhibited in those once happy and enlightened regions, which were honored by the birth of the greatest heroes, statesmen and moralists of antiquity.----The human genius receives its tincture from the impression of more general principles, and derives its distinction from the aggregate excellency or depravity of its literary and moral instruction. This proposition might be proved by many arguments, but as the object of this discourse is, to point out and recommend the principle subjects to which the attention of the rising generation should be directed, I shall wave the discussion and support of it, and proceed to display the duty of parents to their offspring, and what plan appears to be most influential in ren-

dering them useful and ornamental members of society.

When God ordained the different conditions of human life ; when he fixed the numerous relations which mankind bear to each other, he attached to that in which parents stand, the most pleasing sensations, and the most momentous duties ; he made man, not merely the guardian of his progeny during their first years of helplessness, their watchful defender when incapable of protecting themselves, and then relieved his anxious cares by destroying those tender solitudes which characterize parental regard ; he fixed his attention, not only to the present ease and support of his children, but taught him to look forward to futurity in the exercise of his kind feelings, and by the communication of an enlarged zeal for their interest, not only to provide for the gratification of their corporal appetites, to supply the animal wants of their nature, but to enlarge their rational capacities, and to train them up for intellectual and moral life. This is one of the most important branches of the law of nature, and all who cordially believe that there is a God, who

formed all things and disposes of them according to his will, must, independent of the light of revelation, perceive, that as parents are obliged to fear, honor and serve him, it is their duty to impress the same sentiments on the minds of their offspring. The heathens, previous to the promulgation of the christian faith, were acquainted with this law; nay, it was esteemed of such moment that the best commonwealths took cognizance of it; it particularly exercised the brilliant talents of Cicero, and drew from his animated pen, some of the most excellent moral precepts. And none can be ignorant that on this important subject the injunctions of revelation are plain and clear, positive and peremptory; they display it as a first principle, and, in the most pointed manner, express its duty and importance. Apposite texts, from the sacred writings, might be so far multiplied as to exceed the intended limits of this discourse; I shall therefore beg the exercise of your candor, while I proceed to point out those objects to which parents should particularly attend in the education of their offspring; these objects will

naturally range themselves under the three following general ideas :----

Instruction in those subjects which particularly relate to their future destination in life----in ornamental acquisitions-----and in moral and religious principles.

I need not spend much of your time in enlarging upon the first of these topicks. There are few parents so low in the scale of rational estimation as to take no preparatory steps to secure the future subsistence of their children ; thinly strewed, I hope for the honor of human nature, are those unfeeling wretches who extend not their parental assistance to those, in whose behalf nature commands the most tender, and if necessary, the most laborious exertions ; even in the most profligate, some instances of these amiable attentions are visible, and tho' few of the lowest orders of society possess providence sufficient to acquire property for the future benefit of their children, yet scarcely any facts are more universal than that they procure their instruction in those departments of employment by which they may gain, if well disposed, an honest livelihood ; by which they

are empowered to make a decent appearance amongst their neighbors, and enjoy the innocent pleasures of domestic and social life. If we rise higher in the ranks of civil community, and examine the middle walks of life, we find the different active and commercial departments filled with industrious and opulent citizens, who rejoice in the fruits of their laudable and beneficial exertions, and direct the attention of their successors to those pursuits which are calculated to prolong the possession of wealth, and to render them active and useful in their situations.

And if the fact were not so universal; if multitudes could be found, who are regardless of those tender and animating offices which relate to the present subsistence and the future comfort of their offspring, would the duty be less binding? Would it be a less sinful act; a less aggravated offence, to leave our children unprotected in their helpless years, and the youths, who spring from our loins, ignorant of the means of future subsistence? No; nature would punish us for a dereliction of her tenderest rights, and every lover of humanity would detest us for our cruelty; con-

science, when roused into accusation, would present its agonizing tortures, and the author of our being would inflict upon us adequate sufferings for the infraction of his laws. Parents who are guilty of this flagrant outrage on the principles of humanity, will be strangers, in the decline of life, to those complacent feelings, which arise from the recollection of duties zealously accomplished and productive of their proper fruits ; they will be ignorant of those joys which flow from the possession of property honourably acquired, and the prospect of fixing their children advantageously in the world ; they will have cause to look forward to death with terror, and the appearance of their judge with amazement ! It is true that the most anxious and zealous exertions are not always crowned with success, and numerous honest and industrious characters are the sport of disappointment and the prey of villainy, but their rectitude shall sustain them in the hour of misfortune, and they shall descend to the grave accompanied by the blessings and not the reproaches of their children.

The second subject, to which I purpose to call the attention of parents, includes those topics which relate to ornamental acquisitions. My auditors must be sensible that this part of my address will principally, if not wholly, apply to those ranks of the community whose situation is somewhat enlarged, and whose condition in life is such as to justify them in extending their views of instruction beyond merely necessary acquirements, and in preparing their offspring for the elegant scenes of life. This subject will divide itself into two parts; and it is obvious to the most partial reflection, that personal accomplishments should be attended to in refined and civilized society, and that youth should be accustomed to that polite address and those engaging manners, which never fail to impress the heart of every beholder. As assistants in this respect, those exercises which now generally obtain in the course of modern education are not unimportant; but mistake me not----I would wish that this branch of instruction, tho' of acknowledged utility, when moderately attended to, were for ever annihilated, rather than that it should be made the principal

object of education; for tho' influential on manners, and productive of ease in social intercourse, its consequence is only of a secondary nature, and should be considered merely as an assistant in the display of manly sentiments and liberal information; when it obtrudes itself as a first principle, and is suffered to constitute the main part of education in families, you find those families distinguished as much for the absence of useful and literary knowledge, as they may be for a polished exterior; in them the apathy of uninteresting life takes place, and contracted are the sources of manly and rational pleasure.

What then are the principal subjects of a liberal course of studies for youths who are intended for the commercial and middle ranks of life? There is too great reason to believe and indeed to complain, that the elements of science, the mere assistants to the acquisition of knowledge are supposed, by many, to constitute the only valuable object of instruction to youth who are destined for commercial life, and that enlarged views of mankind, both in ancient and modern times, together with general ideas of those sciences which

excite the attention of professional characters, are rather unnecessary than momentous branches of youthful instruction. It is not my object to convict such persons of folly, but to point out the importance of liberal education in a twofold light; in a commercial and social view.

In a commercial view, it will sufficiently appear, when we consider, that the necessary influence of an early attention to liberal topics of instruction, is, to enlarge the mind; to quicken its apprehension; to point out the most important objects of attention, and by multiplying and strengthening the powers of the understanding to facilitate its application to any important art or employment; nay, in many spheres of active life, the branches of enlarged science are of peculiar importance; for, in a thousand instances, the interests of commerce have been essentially promoted by the labors of the philosophers, and tho' some of highly-gifted, but uninstructed genius, have astonished the world, by their ready application of mechanical, and other philosophical powers, to the purposes of commerce, and by that honorable means have raised to themselves prince-

ly property, and produced the benefit of society, yet the probability of important discoveries, in this respect, lies in the scale of philosophical instruction, and of consequence, demonstrates the importance of attaching the growing reason to the pursuits of science.

In a social view, liberal instruction in youth, is possessed of the utmost weight; for, is it not its natural tendency to impart to society its principal ornament and attraction, and to give a brilliancy to human converse? Is it not possessed of power to turn the active powers of man into the most useful and pleasing channels; to withdraw his attention from objects and pursuits of a trifling nature, to those which are worthy and beneficial? Methinks I see the liberal and enlightened, when in commercial departments, retiring after the bustle of the active day, to the study of those subjects which exalt the intellect, and form some of the purest pleasures of human life; designing the enlargement of the general interests of commerce; or roaming over the expanded fields of science; mixing with similar characters, and investigating historical facts and

political or philosophical principles; or, in the circle of their families, instructing the ignorant, and animating them to the love and pursuit of science. Did the ignorant know what reverence and regard a wise man feels for a well-informed and virtuous character; were they capable of imagining the satisfaction which enlarged minds experience, in intimate and literary communications, they would be ashamed of their negligence, and would exert all their faculties to enlarge their understanding, and to deserve the character of reasonable beings. One of the greatest benefits that social life experiences from the cultivation of science is, that it contracts the number of those injurious characters whom the world calls slanderers;----the natural activity of the human mind leads it, in society, to the discussion of some subject, and when an acquaintance with topicks of a laudable nature is absent, those generally of an injurious and vicious tendency obtrude themselves, and either fix the lascivious purpose, or stab the character. The cultivation of knowledge remedies this evil, and exercises the active powers of man on proper subjects, calls them

forth in the display of liberal and manly ideas, and enlarges the dignity of the human character.

I now proceed to the concluding and most important part of my discourse, which respects more particularly the subject of the text, or, moral and religious culture.

If it is of acknowledged moment that parents should engage in those duties which concern the temporal ease and welfare of their offspring; if it is incumbent upon them to exert their best powers to prepare them for action on the great theatre of life; to enable them to adorn those spheres in which providence may place them, should not the most animated zeal be indulged in fixing and giving life to every moral and religious principle? for, in moral and religious acquirements consists the chief dignity and happiness of man; deprive him of these and you make him ignorant of the true principles and grounds of rectitude and honor, and dry up the purest sources of human joy; you degrade him in the creation, and render him an improper object for the future rewards of his maker.

To finish, then, the characters of your off-

spring; to complete the circle of your parental duties in their behalf, permit me to exhort you to give them religious instruction. I take it for granted, that it is the first wish of your hearts to render them respectable and happy; to exalt their enjoyments both in the present and future state of being; impress, therefore, upon their tender minds that there is a God, who formed them; who is the author of all the blessings which they enjoy; that there is a being who takes notice of all their actions, and that he will punish or reward them according to their virtuous or criminal conduct; and let your examples animate them to the love of that which is good; let them perceive that your actions are agreeable to your instructions; that you do not give them advice which has no influence over your own conduct; but, that a steady and rational principle of piety regulates your actions, and that you indulge a greater anxiety that they should imitate your examples, than that they should receive from you the fleeting treasures of this world. Many parents, by their inattention to this part of their duty, are the causes of ruin to those whom they professedly love, and instead of

being their best friends become, though unintentionally, their worst enemies. Let not, then, a fondness for the concerns of business or an attachment to scenes of pleasure, be allowed to plead for the neglect of this important branch of duty; but let it be one of your first concerns; one of your principal pleasures.---The daily practice of it will yield delights superior to any that arise from opulence or the glitter and parade of the world; the former are sincere, cordial and permanent; the latter, fleeting as the pageant of a day;---the former productive of all that satisfaction which can be the object of a rational wish, as well in this life as in a future state, and the latter fit only to constitute the main enjoyment of the simple and unreflecting.

I cannot but think that it is of the utmost importance to youth in that class of life which I am now principally considering to receive regular instruction in the first principles of natural religion; to gain information respecting those arguments which are adduced in favor of the existence, perfections and attributes of a Supreme Being; the nature, extent and obligation of moral

principles, and the evidences of Christianity.----

An attention to this branch of education seems to be confined to those seminaries which are designed for the instruction of theological characters, and by this means the interests of religion are not so well supported as they might be, nor a rational belief of Christianity so prevalent as its importance merits.

Should it not then be the object of every private seminary to give information to the rising generation on the most important principles which can engage their attention and influence their conduct, not merely by the accidental display of them in conversation, but by the elucidation of first principles and the gradual opening of more important topicks, and by making them the subjects of serious and unwearied instruction as including a main part of Education? And should not every parent think it his duty to see that such a course should be entered into by his offspring?

The novelty of this plan will not, I hope, fasten upon it the charge of folly by any, and I am convinced that its importance will be freely

acknowledged by all who are accustomed to enlarged reflection ; every virtuous opponent of the fanaticism and enthusiasm of the age will perceive its power in preventing the encroachments of those enemies to rational religion, and will give his suffrage in its favor ; it would give to youths a regularity in their mode of thinking and conversing on subjects of the utmost moment to the present and future felicity of men, and, when arrived at mature age, would enable them to cope with and confute those advocates of infidelity who are too numerous in the circles of commercial life.

To conclude ; be exhorted to reflect, with seriousness, on the subjects which have been addressed to you ; be persuaded to impart to your offspring useful and ornamental knowledge ; but, above all, “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”----thus shall your parental feelings be amply gratified ; the purest of human joys shall be your portion ; the God of nature will reward you for complying with his sacred injunctions, and your children shall rise up and call you blessed !

Now unto the Supreme Parent of all rational creatures; to the being who hath annexed to the several relations in which we stand to one another the most binding duties and the most refined delights, be ascribed all honor, majesty and praise now and for ever! Amen.



MR CATLOW convinced of the justice of the reasoning adopted in the foregoing discourse and anxious to produce the benefit of society, as well as usefully and beneficially to employ his own time, takes the liberty to inform those into whose hands this may fall, that he, some time past, opened a Seminary at Mansfield, the object of which is, to prepare young gentlemen, by liberal instruction, for the commercial departments of life, and for an entrance upon professional studies.

If his pupils are entered so early as at the age of ten or twelve years they are instructed in those branches of science which are adapted to their years, and gradually rise to those of greater importance; attention is paid to their opening powers, and every endeavor used to attach them, by pleasing motives, to the acquisition of knowledge; reading and speaking the English language with propriety and elegance, together with Writing, Commercial Accounts, the Classics and French constitute the subjects of study at this age, and tho' they are still attended to at a more advanced period, yet Composition, Geography, Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, will then claim regard;----at this time, also, a plan of Moral and Religious Instruction will be entered into, the design of which is, to impress the mind with a clear and rational view of the existence and attributes of God, the moral and civil duties of mankind and the Evidences of Christianity, which Mr. Catlow apprehends are of the utmost importance to youths who are designed for commercial life or for the liberal professions.

Mr.

Mr. Catlow will also instruct those who are designed for the pulpit in the Hebrew language, and he flatters himself that his activity in the above departments and his great tenderness to his pupils will recommend his plan to a liberal public.---- His situation is in a pleasant and retired part of the town of Mansfield, which place affords conveniences for dancing, the military exercise and cold bathing.

The terms for board and tuition in the above branches of knowledge are fixed at twenty-five guineas per annum.

There are two vacations, of a month each, at Midsummer and Christmas.



